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SUBJECT: USAID/OFDA Darfur Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene  
Assessment

¶1. (U) Summary: Despite adequate safe drinking water supply in most internally displaced person (IDP) camps in Darfur, substantial gaps remain in sanitation and hygiene services, according to USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) advisor. WASH partners are working to design and implement additional water supply strategies in rural areas and are considering interventions to address nomad water access concerns. End Summary.

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CURRENT WASH SERVICES: SUCCESSES AND GAPS  
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¶2. (U) From October 3 to 14, a USAID/OFDA field team, including the WASH advisor, visited program sites in internally displaced person (IDP) camps, host communities, and rural areas in North, West, and South Darfur to observe program implementation and sector trends.

¶3. (U) According to partner reports and field observations, the quantity of water is adequate in most IDP camps, although water usage assessments are needed to verify per capita water use due to the constant flux in camp population. International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Government of National Unity (GNU) monitor and report on water quality through the Office of Water, Environment, and Sanitation (WES). The USAID/OFDA WASH advisor noted that IDPs and host community members not only use water for cooking, drinking, and personal hygiene but also for livelihoods and income-generating activities such as brick-making, watering animals, and transporting and selling water to nearby urban areas. With UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) support, WES was able to adequately fill water provision gaps created by the March 2009 NGO expulsions.

¶4. (U) Hygiene and sanitation needs have been chronically underserved in Darfur, with gaps present even prior to the expulsions. Now, with fewer NGOs operating in this sector, the sanitation situation in some areas has declined to critical levels. In several areas, NGO partners are overwhelmed by sanitation and hygiene needs. Kalma IDP camp in South Darfur provides a notable example. Prior to the expulsions, CARE, OXFAM/GB, and WES all worked in the WASH sector in the camp with programs including solid waste management, latrine construction and cleaning, hygiene promotion, water provision, and water quality monitoring. After the expulsion of CARE and OXFAM, USAID/OFDA partner American Refugee Committee (ARC), with support from UNICEF, began WASH activities in the camp, but the work requirements to provide WASH support to the estimated 82,000 individuals in Kalma are far greater than what one NGO can accomplish independently. (Note: Following the NGO expulsions, Kalma camp leaders have refused to permit WES or any other Sudanese government agency to enter or work in the camp. End note.) In recent weeks, NGOs providing health services in the camp

have reported increased cases of diarrhea and skin diseases, which are soft indicators of deteriorating hygiene and sanitation. However, to date in 2009, health monitors have not recorded any cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD), due in part to AWD prevention programs, including soap distribution, hygiene education, and water quality monitoring.

15. (U) WES and UNICEF monitor groundwater depletion throughout Darfur and note that the water table shows signs of depletion near urban areas with large populations and African Union-UN Hybrid Operations in Darfur (UNAMID) facilities, where water demand and usage are high. UNICEF and WES engineers are examining various methods to increase groundwater recharge in these areas. Water shortages are possible in the future if ground water is insufficiently recharged by less than average rainfall and demand for water remains high.

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PROVIDING FOR PASTORALISTS  
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16. (U) In meetings with USAID/OFDA staff, WES described a plan to target pastoralists, who claim to have been marginalized by the Sudanese government and the international community over many years. During the spring and fall migrations, pastoralists historically remain for two weeks or more near villages to access village water. Pastoralists' visits cause disruptions to village life and migrating animals may damage crops. WES proposes placing water sources for pastoralists a distance away from villages to minimize negative interactions between the populations. The personnel who maintain the village water system could also service additional water points, with WES support. Nearby villages could use these water points for

KHARTOUM 00001266 002 OF 002

additional water when the pastoralists are not present. This solution would require substantial GNU support.

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RURAL WATER PROVISION  
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17. (U) In rural areas, UNICEF and WES are improving water provision services. Each year, UNICEF and WES attempt to raise the percentage of funds allocated to rural areas while maintaining service levels in IDP camps. The USAID/OFDA WASH advisor noted that WES is the best implementer of rural water activities because the agency will be responsible for maintaining water systems in the future and has good access in GNU-controlled areas in Darfur. The WASH advisor further noted that standards for water provision in rural areas are not equivalent to water needs in IDP camps. The GNU has established standards for rural water provision that far exceed available water in these areas, even prior to the beginning of the Darfur conflict.

18. (U) Comment: Security remains the major constraint to working in rural areas of Darfur. The general atmosphere of insecurity and the absence of rule of law in Darfur, including recent kidnappings and continued incidences of banditry, discourage NGOs from working in deep field locations. Sustainability of water interventions requires not only hardware installation but also the software of training mechanics and ensuring a supply chain of spare parts. Despite these challenges, USAID/OFDA will continue to provide water, sanitation, and hygiene support to vulnerable populations in Darfur, including in rural areas, when possible.

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